



Families and Schools TOGETHER<sup>®</sup> INC.  
PROTECTING HEARTS AND MINDS<sup>™</sup>

February 19, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

Families and Schools Together, Inc., distributor of the FAST Program, strongly supports the 2009 Farm-2-School (LRB-3789/2) which promotes the use of locally grown food in school meals and snacks and granting rule-making authority.

We believe that the Farm-2-School project will be successful in serving Wisconsin children and families and is in line with the Healthy FAST program goals and outcomes. Healthy FAST engages parents and their children in healthy living lifestyles that are fun, healthy and physically engaging, and that teach, not by lecturing, but by using principles of experiential learning in order to develop healthy eating practices and behaviors, build social support, and foster a nurturing environment. Program outcomes include weight loss, improved nutrition, increased nutritional and agricultural education, increased physical activity, development of healthy eating habits including increased consumption of fruits/vegetables among families who participated in the program. As we know that food that is produced and consumed closer to home has better nutritional value and can be easier to maintain – the Healthy FAST program and its facilitator's have provided education and advocacy to participating families for buying local, healthy, organic foods and has helped families find the resources to do so.

Please accept our show of support for:

Assembly Bill 746

Sincerely,

Pat Davenport, CEO  
Families and Schools Together, Inc.  
2801 International Lane  
Suite 212  
Madison, Wisconsin  
53704  
608-663-2382  
[pdavenport@familiesandschools.org](mailto:pdavenport@familiesandschools.org)  
[www.familiesandschools.org](http://www.familiesandschools.org)

February 22, 2010

Dear Assembly Committee on Agriculture:

As a registered dietitian with the Monroe County Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), I serve families with inconsistent food resources. These vulnerable families benefit from resources and opportunities that provide healthful and safe foods.

Our participants spent \$4,405 in 2009 at our local farmers' markets and farmstands to purchase locally grown fruits, vegetables and herbs with the help of the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program grant dollars our program receives. WIC can only serve children up to the age of 5. Once they turn 5, we hope they are still visiting the local farmers' markets and farmstands, but we have no resources to encourage our families to continue their relationships with local food growers/producers.

As a nation, we are aware that consuming a variety of fruits and vegetables is good for us (lots of great vitamins, minerals, phytochemicals, etc.), but we continue NOT to eat enough of them. I believe part of the reason we are not eating enough fruits and vegetables is because we need to know about fruits and vegetables, have them available and begin to understand what they are, where they came from, and what to do with them. I find that children have an amazing ability to encourage their parents to do what they want AND if we can continue to introduce our kids to the good things fruits and vegetables can do for us then maybe we can have an impact not only on their life, but also on the lives they impact most (their parents, siblings, and later in life, their own children).

Farm to School programs are providing an opportunity for children to have access to local and regional foods that are delivered fresh, safe and close to home. Schools have the opportunity to develop relationships with the farmers growing/producing their foods and both are able to work together to create recipes in the most inviting ways to encourage our children to eat them. Our children are getting opportunities to learn where their foods are coming from and they are getting excited about these foods.

I look forward to the opportunity Farm to School programs provide our children and as a registered dietitian I am thankful for programs like this that help provide healthful and safe foods in our community.

Sincerely,

Patricia Hagen M.A.S.L., R.D., C.D.

Monroe County WIC Coordinator/Nutritionist

14301 County Highway B, A-18

Sparta, WI 54656

(608) 269-8671



American Heart Association | American Stroke Association  
*Learn and Live.*

**you're the cure.**

TO: Members of the Assembly Committee on Agriculture

FROM: Luke D. Rollins  
Sr. Director of State Advocacy  
American Heart Association  
2850 Dairy Drive, St. 300  
Madison, WI 53718  
Luke.rollins@heart.org

DATE: February 24, 2010

RE: AB-746 (Farm-2-School)

The American Heart Association would like to thank Chairperson Vruwink and the Assembly Committee on Agriculture for this opportunity to express our strong support for AB-746 (farm-2-school).

The prevalence of cardiovascular disease and stroke can be reduced through knowing your numbers, monitoring your cholesterol, not smoking, physical activity and improved nutrition. We as a state are taking a positive step in the fight against cardiovascular diseases and stroke by increasing experience, exposure, and education to fresh fruits and vegetables in our schools.

This farm-2-school initiative is an important step because of the following:

- 25% of Wisconsin high school students are overweight and obese.
- Nearly 30% of two to four year olds participating in the WIC program are overweight or obese.
- 37% of high school students in the Milwaukee Public School District are overweight and obese.
- 43% of two to four year old American Indian children participating in WIC are overweight or obese.
- About 65% of Wisconsin Adults are overweight and obese.
- Cardiovascular diseases are the number one killer in Wisconsin, accounting for 32% of all deaths.
- Stroke is the third leading cause of death and is a leading cause of disability in Wisconsin.

Farm-2-School programs are a win-win for Wisconsin farmers and Wisconsin students. The program helps farmers access new markets for their agricultural products while providing students with healthy fresh fruits and vegetables and other Wisconsin grown food.

-more-

Farm-2-School pilot projects around the state have shown that serving our students locally grown food increases their consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables, both at school and at home, and provides a local market for our farmers.

AB-746 creates the framework for a statewide farm-2-school program by establishing: a statewide Farm-2-School Advisory Council at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection; a statewide Farm-2-School coordinator; and, grant program to assist in the advancement of this worthwhile program. AB-746 has zero appropriations as this point. There The farm-2-school coalition is working with DATCP on funding opportunities.

The mission of the American Heart Association is to build healthier lives free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke. As well, February is heart month. The American Heart Association commends the Assembly Committee on Agriculture making farm-2-school a policy priority for the State of Wisconsin.

**MICHAEL FIELDS**  
**AGRICULTURAL INSTITUTE**



February 24, 2010

To: Chairperson Vruwink and Members of the Assembly Agriculture Committee  
From: Bridget Holcomb, Associate Policy Director for Michael Fields Agricultural Institute

Re: Support for AB 746, Farm to School

On behalf of Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, thank you for considering AB 746, Wisconsin's first Farm to School legislation. I urge you to vote yes to help our farmers access a lucrative new market.

Farm to School programs are great for Wisconsin farmers. With these programs, farmers get:

- a guaranteed market from a local buyer
- an alternative to direct marketing and time saved by focusing on one buyer
- farm name recognition and increased sales in other venues
- the chance to feed healthful, local foods to kids, which sometimes includes their own kids!

**Do not mistake** Farm to School programs for a niche market. Connecting farmers to schools will have a significant impact on our agricultural economy. It is for this reason that groups like the Wisconsin Farmers Union and the Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association have signed on in support. In fact, Andy Diercks of the Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association says, "There are so many healthy ways to serve potatoes that kids love. We can have an effect on school lunches while building Wisconsin markets for our growers."

**Why do we need the state to support Farm to School programs?**

- While farmers, schools, students and rural economies benefit from Farm to School programs, there are common obstacles.
- Right now, Wisconsin has a lack of coordinated information and resources, and schools wanting to start Farm to School programs often do not know where to begin.
- By creating the framework to share information, resources and success stories, we can greatly expand Farm to School across the state, making Wisconsin a leader in connecting our schools with our farmers.

The time is right for this bill. We can create new local and regional markets for our farmers while tackling childhood obesity, one of the biggest health threats today. As other states across the country pass Farm to School legislation, providing Wisconsin farmers and schools the tools to create Farm to School programs is a positive step for the state's agriculture.

16 N Carroll St Ste 810, Madison, WI 53703  
Phone: 608-256-1859 [Bridget@MichaelFieldsAgInst.org](mailto:Bridget@MichaelFieldsAgInst.org)

Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Assembly Bill 746. About 2 years ago, group of Crawford County area producers, parents, teachers, food service directors and community members formed Food-4-Thought, a grassroots farm-to-school movement. The goal of Food-4-Thought was to help teach students the path between farm and fork and instill healthy eating habits while supporting the area farmers. Since we started, we have seen results beyond our wildest dreams.

The community came together to:

- Build a school garden at B.A. Kennedy Elementary School in Prairie du Chien
- Provide healthy fresh snacks to the elementary school students twice a week every week throughout the school year
- Provide monthly classroom education and tastings that correspond to a local featured food in the lunchroom
- Source from local farmers

As a result, the students are **taking and eating more fruits and vegetables during lunch**. Just this past Monday, we received the *Standing Up for Rural Schools, Libraries, and Communities Award* from Tony Evers, State Superintendent.

We have seen a positive change in the students' attitudes, but we didn't anticipate the positive change we have seen in the community. The farm-to-school program has acted like a catalyst for a countywide local foods movement. A group of producers and local food advocates have collaborated to form DRIFTLESS WISCONSIN GROWN (DWG). One of DWG's goals is to work together to expand their market to include schools and institutions. The group has also partnered with Prairie du Chien's Mainstreet Organization to revitalize a downtown farmers market. The Opportunity Center, a work center for people with physical and mental disabilities, has partnered with the City of Prairie du Chien to build a Community Kitchen to help meet the community's economic development goals and to help provide storage and processing for the farm-to-school program.

Please support Assembly Bill 746 to help farm-to-school efforts throughout the state. Not only would it be good for our children's health and wellbeing, it would be good for the health and wellbeing our rural communities.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Kathleen Hein, Mom, educator, and City Council Member

# ASSEMBLY BILL 746

February 24, 2010

Testimony for Information Only

Bill Wright

Community Garden Coordinator

Brown County UW-Extension

Green Bay, WI

Wright\_wp@co.brown.wi.us

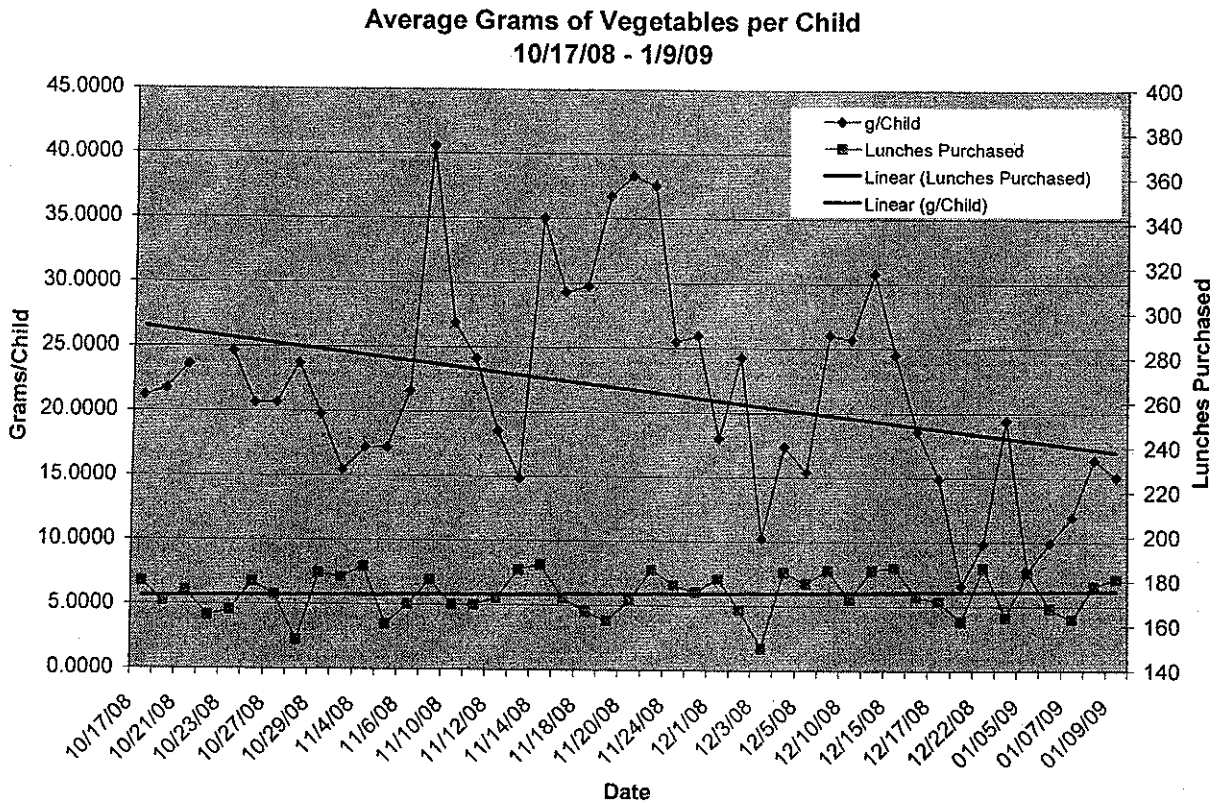
There are several factors to consider regarding Farm to School including economic development, capabilities of school food service departments, etc. Student health and the current obesity epidemic are other areas that bear consideration. The Centers for Disease Control has identified increased fruit and vegetable consumption as a viable strategy for fighting obesity. However, fruits and vegetables are often not students' first choice when eating lunch.

Brown County UW-Extension in cooperation with Green Bay Area Public Schools' Food Service Department conducted a research project during the 2008-2009 school year at Elmore Elementary School. The purpose of the study was to determine if various intervention strategies would influence consumption of vegetables by students. The school had 235 students in Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade and 50.5% of the students were eligible for free or reduced lunch. (This is near the median for Green Bay Schools.) The results of this study will be published in the *Wisconsin Medical Journal* in June.

The research project began with nutrition education lessons for all students. The first lesson explained the importance of fruits and vegetables. The second involved food safety, especially salad bar etiquette. On October 16<sup>th</sup>, a school pep rally kicked off the installation of the school's first salad bar. The pep rally included veggie riddles, various songs, a "veggie rap" performed by several students, and the unveiling of the salad bar. Beginning the next day, the salad bar was part of the school lunch for the remainder of the school year. Lettuce was always available and other vegetables including cucumbers, tomatoes, broccoli, etc., were available on a rotational basis.

A few weeks later, students had the opportunity to visit a local organic farm. Later, a week highlighting local foods and featuring locally grown lettuce on the salad bar was also incorporated into the programming. Throughout the study, food service personnel recorded the amount of vegetables selected from the salad bar each day. The data collected from the salad bar each day was divided by the number of students who ate lunch in the cafeteria to determine the average grams of vegetables per student. The

following graph depicts the data for the first period of the study, October 17<sup>th</sup> through January 9<sup>th</sup>:

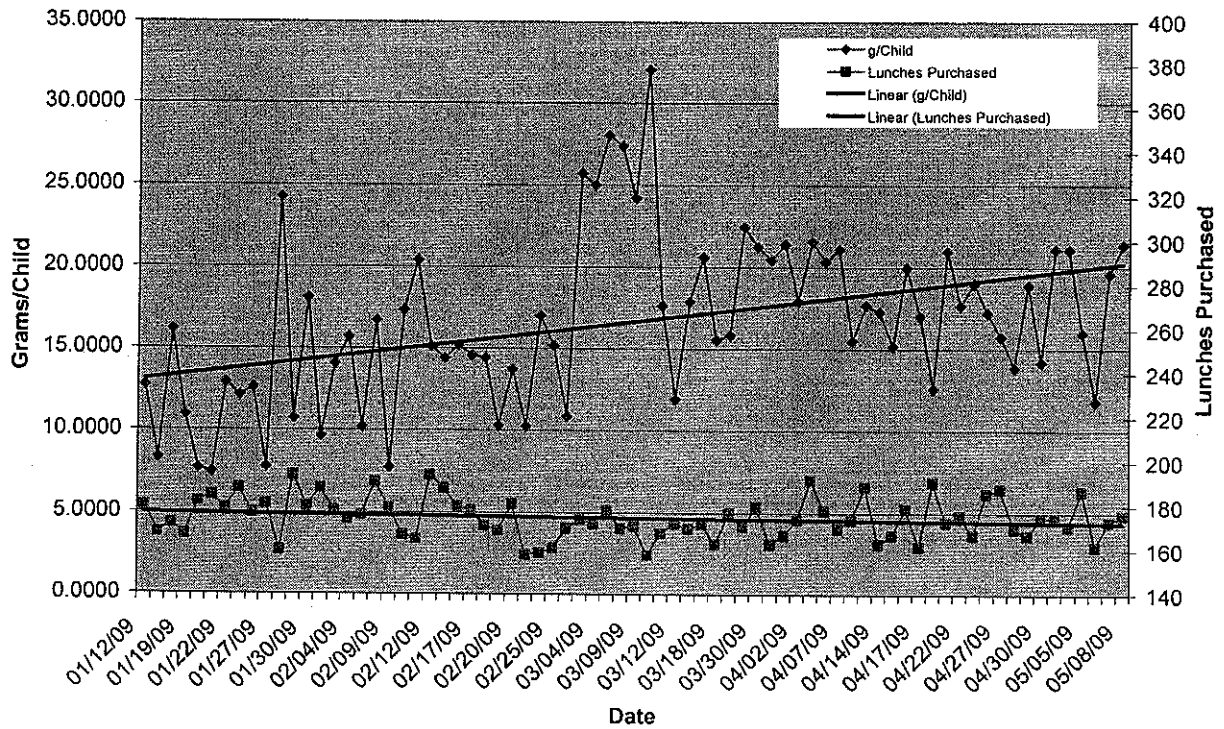


While usage was higher initially, the quantity of vegetables selected decreased as the project continued.

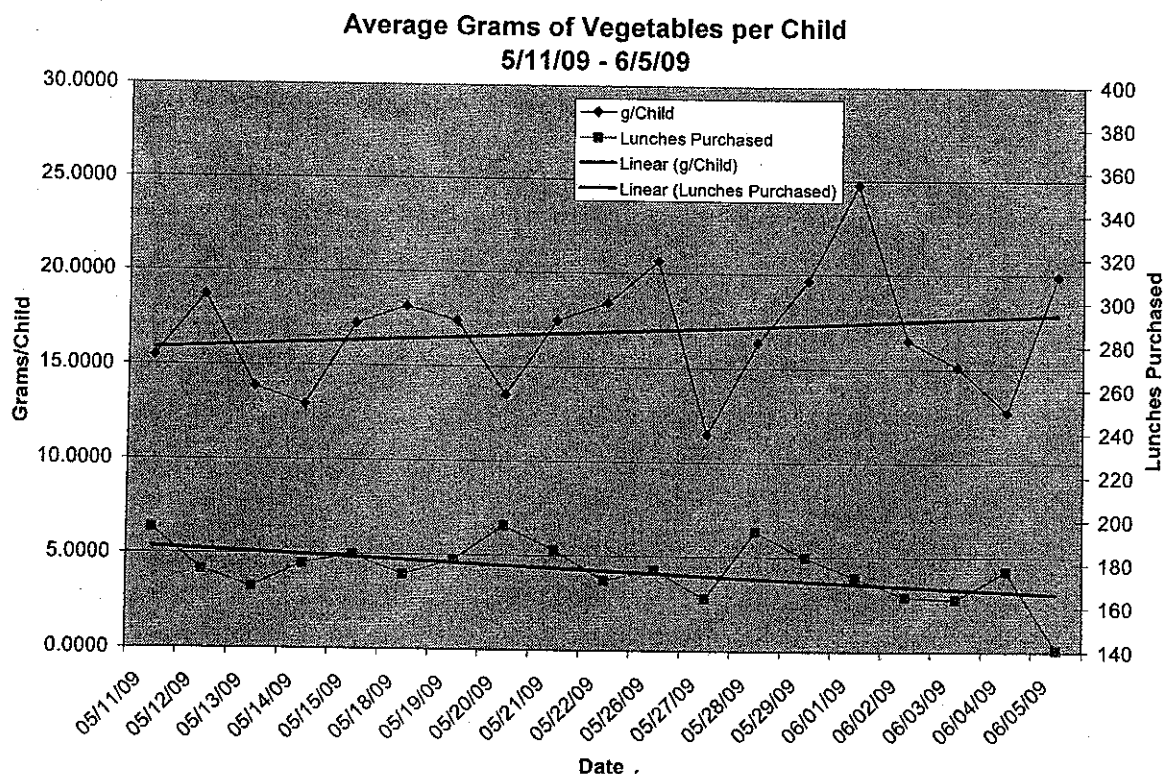
On January 12<sup>th</sup>, students began a classroom gardening project utilizing microfarms, portable gardening carts. Using the microfarm, students grew microgreens, the tender young shoots of vegetable plants. The varieties selected were kohlrabi, carrots, mustard greens, and sunflowers. The planting lesson connected the childrens' previous experiences with the school salad bar to the concept of growing their own salads. The students then planted the seeds, watered, and cared for the plants. At the end of three weeks, the teacher and students harvested the microgreens using scissors. After washing the microgreens, each type of microgreen was sampled individually in order for the students to experience the taste of each. The greens were then combined to form a salad that was shared by the classroom. The microfarms were rotated through all of the classrooms, allowing each student the opportunity to garden. During the gardening portion of the study, salad bar usage was as follows:



# **Average Grams of Vegetables per Child** **1/12/09 - 5/8/09**



During the gardening intervention, the negative trend seen during the earlier period was reversed. Food service continued to collect data after the gardening intervention concluded and the results were as follows:



The trend line shows that usage during this period leveled off but remained near the levels obtained at the end of the gardening intervention period.

This research indicates that when fresh vegetables are made available, the inclusion of gardening activities increases the quantity of vegetables selected by children. Over an extended period of time, this will hopefully enable students to lead healthier lives.



University of Wisconsin, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Wisconsin counties cooperating. An EEO/AA employer, University of Wisconsin Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title IX and American with Disabilities (ADA) requirements.

Brown County UW-Extension  
Agriculture & Extension Service Center, 1150 Bellevue St., Green Bay, WI 54302-2259  
Phone: (920) 391-4610; Fax: (920) 391-4617  
711 (Wisconsin Relay)



# **JULIE LASSA**

## **STATE SENATOR**

### **PUBLIC HEARING ON ASSEMBLY BILL 746**

Assembly Committee on Agriculture

Wednesday, February 24, 2010

9:15 a.m.

North Hearing Room

Thank you Chairwoman Vruwink and Committee Members for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Assembly Bill 746.

Assembly Bill 746 is an extension of the Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin program designed to increase the availability of healthy, local foods in schools and provide marketing opportunities for local farmers. This legislation connects schools with nearby farms to provide children with locally-produced fresh foods in school meals and snacks, help children develop healthy eating habits, provide nutritional and agricultural education and improve farmers' incomes and direct access to markets.

This bill would also create a Farm-to-School Council within the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection comprised of an appointed employee from the Department of Public Instruction, the Department of Health Services, and the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, as well as farmers, experts in child health, school food service personnel, and other persons with interests in agriculture, nutrition, and education as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. DATCP would also administer grants to participating schools giving preference to proposals that are innovative or that provide models that other school districts can adopt.

Schools that commit to purchasing from Wisconsin farms could generate considerable new income that would stay in their communities. Simply buying from local farms helps cycle money through the region. According to the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, for a typical community, a dollar spent locally circulates in a local economy 2-3 times before leaving the community. By shifting just 10% of consumer food spending to locally-produced products, consumers will contribute nearly \$2 billion to local communities. Buying food from diverse smaller farms that are locally-rooted will build and strengthen local economies as well as the statewide economy.

Assembly Bill 746 is also an excellent opportunity to combat the epidemic of childhood obesity. Obesity is a major risk factor for many serious health conditions, including type 2 diabetes, stroke, heart disease, high blood pressure and certain cancers. According to a report released by

the Trust for America's Health (TFAH) and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in 2009, 27.9 percent of children in Wisconsin between the ages 10-17 are considered overweight or obese. These individuals are more likely to be obese adults than their peers who maintain a healthy weight. Estimated health care costs attributable to obesity in Wisconsin adults total \$1.5 billion. If obesity continues to climb at its current rate, these costs are projected to quadruple in the next decade.

Simply, farm-to-school is a means for increasing access to healthy foods for children, while helping local farmers. Over 21 other states have already adopted state-level Farm to School policies and Wisconsin should do the same.

This bill is supported by the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, the Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, the School Nutrition Association of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Association of Local Health Departments and Boards, the Wisconsin Association of School Boards Inc, the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association, the Wisconsin Council of Religious and Independent Schools, the Wisconsin Dietetic Association Inc, the Wisconsin Farmers Union and the Wisconsin Public Health Association.

Thank you again for allowing me to provide testimony on AB 746. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.



February 22, 2010

The Honorable Members of the Assembly Committee on Agriculture  
Wisconsin State Assembly  
Post Office Box 8953  
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Chairman Vruwink, Vice-Chair Radcliffe, and Members,

I am writing to express the American Cancer Society's support of Assembly Bill 746, related to promoting the use of locally grown foods in school meals.

Approximately one-third of all cancer deaths are attributable to poor diet, physical inactivity, and overweight and obesity. In addition, there is substantial evidence of the relationship between nutrition and cancer risk. Many epidemiologic studies have shown that populations that eat diets high in vegetables, fruits and whole grains and low in animal fat and red and processed meats have reduced risk of some of the most common cancers. Greater consumption of vegetables and fruits is associated with decreased risk of lung, esophageal, stomach and colorectal cancer. In addition, poor nutrition, including consumption of calorie-dense and high sugar foods and beverages, is a major contributor to obesity.

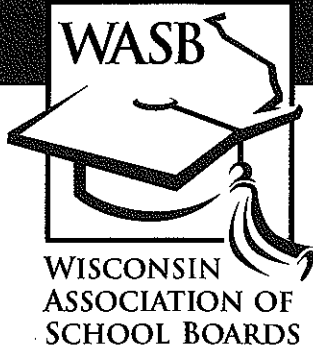
It is essential that healthy eating patterns are established early in childhood. Maintaining healthy eating habits and a healthy weight from childhood through adulthood can substantially reduce an individual's cancer risk. Schools are a critical place to teach children about adopting a healthy diet for life. The Society supports policies that provide quality, affordable nutritious foods in schools and quality, age-appropriate health and physical education to all students.

We recognize that fostering healthy behaviors and removing barriers to healthy eating may be among the most critical actions we can take to promote wellness and reduce the burden of cancer in Wisconsin. The Society supports Assembly Bill 746 as a way to promote healthy eating behaviors and increase access to healthy foods in schools and urges you to approve this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Meyer".

Bob Meyer  
Wisconsin Government Relations Director



122 W. WASHINGTON AVENUE, MADISON, WI 53703  
PHONE: 608-257-2622 • FAX: 608-257-8386

JOHN H. ASHLEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

To: Members, Assembly Committee on Agriculture

From: Dan Rossmiller, WASB Director of Government Relations

RE: Assembly Bill 746, relating to: promoting the use of locally grown food in school meals and snacks (Farm to School).

Date: February 24, 2010

The Wisconsin Association of School Boards **supports** Assembly Bill 746, the "Farm to School" bill, and efforts to promote the use of locally grown food in school meals and snacks.

In these tough economic times, school districts are looking for ways to best manage their financial situations while also providing support for others. One way for school districts to support their local constituents while getting the "most bang for the buck" is by purchasing locally wherever possible. Assembly Bill 746 encourages this approach.

Many Wisconsin school districts already implement local purchasing policies and procedures that ensure opportunity for local vendors. School boards understand the importance of supporting local constituents as those local constituents support the school district, which can create a "win-win" scenario for all involved.

A growing number of Wisconsin school districts are becoming involved in the Farm to School Program, purchasing fresh fruits, vegetables and other food items from local growers and producers. The benefits of Farm to School Programs include: bringing whole foods back into lunch programs, thereby increasing nutritional values; promoting proper nutrition and healthy eating; reconnecting students to the food cycle by introducing them to local agriculture; and providing support for local the farm economy. Further, buying seasonally allows the purchase of foods at the peak of production and at the best price.

However, successful "Farm to School" programs do not simply happen. They require a great deal of work. Assembly Bill 746 recognizes this and provides resources to do the things necessary to facilitate successful programs that can serve as models for others. Districts with successful local food purchasing programs suggest some of the key elements to success include:

- Obtaining the commitment of the school food service manager, the food service staff and the administration and the support of the school board;
- Deciding how and when to start. This includes knowing both financial limits and the limits of staff with regard to labor and time management. Generally, districts should buy only what meets their requirements and fits within their budgets. Many districts start small, choosing one or two items (such as apples or potatoes) to begin with;
- Finding interested growers and producers in the area, communicating with them and, where needed, offering training. Related activities include:
  - Visiting and inspecting the farm sites for safe and unsafe farming and pest management practices to ensure food safety.
  - Agreeing on pertinent issues, such as: delivery terms, payment terms and expectations, weekly pricing and availability, etc., and writing up purchasing agreements are all important. (Availability of the producer and the farm or facility for school educational program activities is also something to be worked out.)
  - Working out production schedules.
- Planning school menus to utilize locally purchased foods;
- Promoting the program by involving the students, staff and community;
- Following up on purchases and reviewing what worked well, what maybe didn't work well and how improvements can be made, which might include finding needed funds to expand the program;
- Contacting growers and producers at the end of the season to review the previous season and plan for the next season.

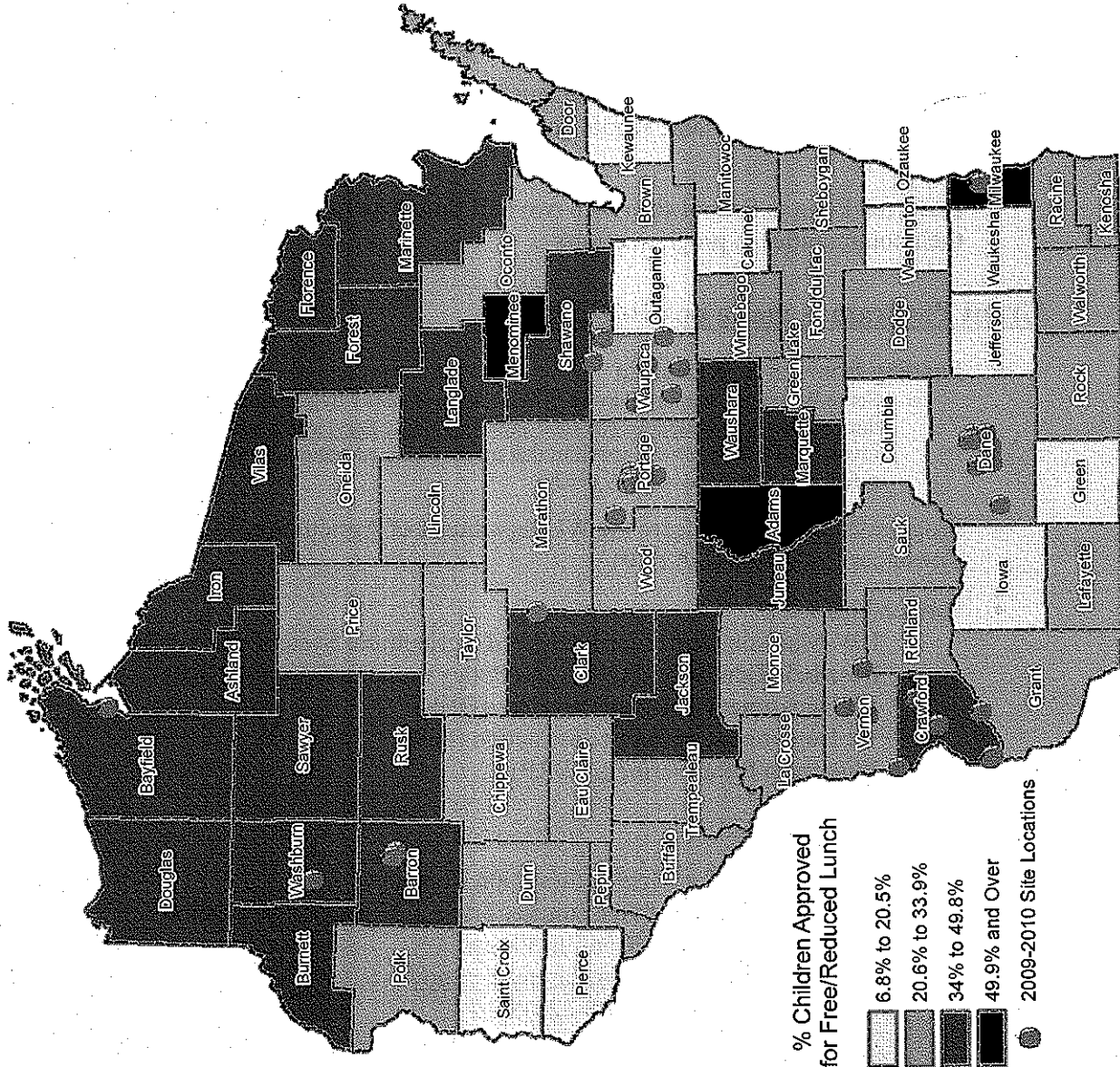
By requiring the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) to create a program for DATCP to provide grants to school districts, nonprofit organizations, and others for the creation and expansion of farm to school programs, Assembly Bill 746 will encourage more school districts to develop and implement farm-to school programs. The bill provides the right mix of financial incentives, information and training to enable such programs to expand.

School board members appreciate that this bill provides incentives rather than mandates for school boards. Encouraging (rather than binding) districts to purchase from local growers and producers is the right approach, one that preserves local control and flexibility to meet both the needs of growers and producers and our schools.

As stewards of taxpayer dollars, school board members recognize that all purchasing decisions, whether buying locally or from elsewhere, should be based on reasonable business judgment and the best interests of the district. For that reason and others we urge the DATCP to include school board members as members of the farm-to-school council established by Assembly Bill 746.

# 2009-2010 AmeriCorps Farm-to-School Sites

Test Site	Schools Served
LW - Extension Crawford County	B4 Kennedy Elementary
	Hillview
	Wareka Elementary
	Seren Elementary
Washington School District - Bayfield County	Washington School District
REAP/CIAS - Dane County	Park Elementary School
	Hawthorne Elementary School
	Lake View Elementary School
	Lincoln Elementary School
	Stemmer Middle School
	Charles Middle School
	Midland School District - Northside
	Midland School District
	Monroe Grove School District - Winnebago
	Monroe Grove School District
	M. Hersh School District - Primary Center, Intermediate Center, Middle Schools
	Spencer School District
	Westby School District
	North Crawford School District
	Viroqua School District
	La Farge School District
	DeSoto School District
	Iola-Sandwich School District
	Clintonville School District
	New London School District
	Waupaca School District
	Marquette - Minawa Elementary
	Marion School District
	Wagonsburg - Waynesburg School
	Barren County School District
	Rice Lake School District
	Colby Elementary School
	The Academy for Learning and Leadership
	Sevens Point Area Public School District
	Boston School Forest
	Hannah Elementary School
	Jefferson Elementary School
	Kennedy Elementary School
	Madison Elementary School
	McMill Elementary School
	McKinley Center
	Pharos-Wisconsin Elementary School
	Roosevelt IDEA School
	Washington Service Learning Center
	Ben Franklin Jr. High
	P.J. Jacobs Jr. High
	Sevens Point Area Senior High
	Charles F. Fernandez Center for Alternative Learning







AmeriCorps members bring local WI produce into WI schools.  
Pictures taken by DATCP AmeriCorps members: Ruth Hilfiker and Kathleen Hein.

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## 2009- 2010 AmeriCorps Farm to School Program Overview

### AmeriCorps Farm to School Goal

The AmeriCorps Farm to School program will provide an innovative approach to decreasing childhood obesity by promoting healthy eating habits in students K-12 and increasing access to local foods in schools.

### Program Elements:

- Identifies and addresses hurdles facing local food procurement in school districts including: distribution, processing, and pricing while building relationships and supporting WI farmers
- Provides nutrition education for students K-12 by developing and implementing curriculum, wellness plans, school gardens, in class demonstrations and farm field trips
- Hosts ten Farm to School sites with two half time AmeriCorps members engaging their communities in program efforts

### Grant Program is made possible by:

- Funding from Serve Wisconsin
  - Serve Wisconsin supports service in Wisconsin primarily by granting AmeriCorps funds through the Corporation for National and Community Service to organizations that involve citizens in service activities that meet human, educational, environmental, public safety, and homeland security needs.
- Program administration from the WI Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP)
- Partnerships with:
  - UW-Madison Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems (UW-CIAS)
  - Research, Education, Action and Policy on Food Group (REAP)
  - WI Department of Health Services (DHS)
  - WI Department of Public Instruction (DPI)
  - Wisconsin Rural Partners (WRP)

For More Information Contact:

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection

Camilla Vargas

[Camilla.Vargas@wi.gov](mailto:Camilla.Vargas@wi.gov)

608-224-5017

Hello everyone, my name is Lisa Jacobson and I am speaking in support of Bill AB-746 as the Farm to School Program Manager for REAP Food Group here in Madison, WI. REAP's Farm to School Programs have worked tirelessly in the last 8 years to impact the school food systems in Madison and the surrounding area by introducing fresh, locally grown produce to schoolchildren supplemented by holistic food education.

Both in the nation and in our state, we have created foodservice systems in schools serving lunches that reinforce poor eating habits early in life and contribute to costly health problems later. We have additionally used these same large, institutionalized food systems to support not our state agriculture but instead large volume buyers offering the lowest rock bottom prices.

Here in Madison I have had the opportunity to observe, teach, and feed nearly 4,000 Madison elementary schoolchildren on a weekly basis through our WI Homegrown Snack Program. These children receive fresh Wisconsin green beans, apples, cherry tomatoes, carrots, sweet potatoes, and kohlrabi. We have purchased thousands of pounds of WI produce with our small program. The demand for this program is high and we are unable to serve all the schools that would like our service. In particular we are unable to serve many high free and reduced lunch schoolchildren because the USDA snack grant does not fund their school.

Time and time again I have had the opportunity to hear a child say, "I will never eat that. I don't like vegetables," and after participating in our snack program beg for more fresh, raw kohlrabi. They remember the farmers who visit their classroom and are able to draw a natural connection between what is on their plate and where it came from and the person from Wisconsin who grew it.

School foodservice directors are often hard-pressed to be innovative in the restrictive environment of institutional foods. Under the current system foodservice directors have to put extra time and resources into supporting local farms that often do not exist. It is time for Wisconsin to recognize the demonstrated, replicable economic and nutritional value of farm to school programs and support farm to school initiatives across the state.

Lisa Jacobson  
REAP Food Group  
Farm to School Program Manager



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Stoughton, WI 53589

(608) 446-6962

blucmooncommunityfarm@yahoo.com

**Statement in support of AB746/SB536 Farm to School  
2/24/10**

Good Morning,

My name is Kristen Kordet. I am the owner and operator of Blue Moon Community Farm, a diversified vegetable farm in Dane County WI. My experiences as both a grower and a farmer educator for REAP Food Group's Wisconsin Homegrown Lunch program feed my great interest and support of this legislation.

As a vegetable producer, a Farm to School Program offers a new marketing opportunity, one that could help my farm to grow and gain efficiency in my production and distribution systems. But what I want to speak about today is my work with students through the Wisconsin Homegrown Lunch program, and the overwhelming need and excitement for fresh fruits and vegetables, *Wisconsin* fruits and vegetables, that I have witnessed.

Each winter for the past 6 years, I have spent many hours in Madison classrooms sharing lessons about farms and food. Our early lessons focused on farms themselves, and the incredible diversity among Wisconsin's farmers. We talked about the distance fresh vegetables and fruits travel, and the costs associated with that distance. We tasted local vegetables stored at my farm, and savored the flavor that Wisconsin soils can produce.

The students are now catching on, and these days my lessons are more sophisticated. No longer timid or uninterested, they greet me excitedly with questions like "Did you bring kohlrabi??" and "Are we going to make the winter salad again? I LOVE that salad!" Now we talk about winter root storage and hoophouse production, grassfed meats and sustainable practices. This year, in 20 different classrooms ranging from kindergarten to 5<sup>th</sup> grade, we prepared a salad of Wisconsin vegetables, fruits, and cheese, and the students could not get enough.

Why is it that the students I visited devoured the locally grown carrot sticks offered as a snack, but a teacher shared that most of the "baby carrots" served in the cafeteria get thrown away? Is it that locally grown produce actually tastes better to the students? Or is it that the students knew the story behind those carrots and the farmer who grew them that their preference was so strong? The answer I think is both of these, and an effective

Farm to School Program in Wisconsin will provide both. It will not only showcase the very best local produce with superior taste and freshness than its non-local equivalents, but it will open up avenues of learning that lead to better food choices for our kids.

Schools such as those I worked in have large populations of student who eat 2 meals each day at school. For some, these are the only true meals they receive. Farm to School programs are critical in reaching these students, and can go far to curb the increases in childhood obesity and Type 2 diabetes, both reaching crisis levels. The importance of this Farm to School legislation cannot be overstated. Our kids will live with the consequences of our inability to create healthier food options for them, and Farm to School does it all: it brings healthy food to the table, teaches and excites students about it, and serves as a market for some of the best produce in the world, grown right here in Wisconsin.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kristen Kordet, Owner  
Blue Moon Community Farm



# Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems

University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Research Division, College of Agricultural and Life Sciences  
Wisconsin Institute for Sustainable Agriculture  
1535 Observatory Drive, Madison, Wisconsin 53706  
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## Public Hearing re. 2010 Assembly Bill 746 Committee on Agriculture

Comments from Sara Tedeschi  
Great Lakes Farm to School Network Coordinator, UW Madison Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

My name is Sara Tedeschi. I coordinate the Great Lakes Farm to School Network as part of a National Network, with the UW-Madison Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems. [www.farmtoschool.org](http://www.farmtoschool.org)

I have been working with farm to school programs in Wisconsin since 2002, and nationally and regionally since 2008. The good news that I am here to report is that farm to school, as a community inspired approach to health and revitalized local economies, is taking off like never before all around the country. For myself and my 10 counterparts across the U.S. comprising the National Farm to School Network, we find that we can only graze the surface in terms of responding to all the interest and inquiries we receive from the local level. However, what is also a positive trend in farm to school growth is the organizing and policy activity at the state level. In my region of the Great Lakes only MI and IL have passed farm to school legislation, however I can say that all other 4 states are in some stage of state level discussions around organizing, policy and most importantly interstate agency cooperation in partnership with community based and stakeholder groups working to increase farm to school activity in their state. Across the nation, the number of states having passed farm to school legislation is 24 and rising.

In the state of Oregon, (a state having passed farm to school legislation twice now), an excellent pilot was done, showing that funds spent by school food programs (one urban one rural) on locally produced foods had a economic multiplier effect of 2:1 in the school's community. These are results that point to potential economic stimulus for our communities that simply can not be overlooked. These results are only the beginning of the long and short term benefits of farm to school. The potential impact on children's immediate health and long term understanding of where their foods comes from and how it affects their health also can not be overlooked. It is our collective responsibility to support our schools to be active agents of change and innovation with farm to school.

State organizing and programming seems to be the current direction for farm to school and it makes all the sense in the world. After all, we are trying to link up WI farms with WI schools to benefit WI children and WI communities. To do this effectively, efficiently and to ensure that we are truly reaching our target goals, it requires the our state agencies to work together to: assess needs, develop resources, provide outreach and training, work to minimize unnecessary constraints and provide incentives for rural and urban communities alike to take leadership and an active, creative role in making farm to school work in their locale.

Although I work on these issues nationally, I am a long time WI resident and want to see WI keep step with this positive trend in community wellness and economic growth. WI is a leader in agriculture, a vibrant diversified agriculture. We are positioned incredibly well to be leaders, setting precedent and models for success in farm to school for our region and across the country.

Thank you.

Sara Tedeschi, National Farm to School Network  
UW Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems  
608-513-3980, [smtedeschi@wisc.edu](mailto:smtedeschi@wisc.edu)

CIAS brings people together to study relationships between farming practices, farm profitability, the environment and rural vitality.

*Monique  
J. Hooker*

*Culinary Lecturer  
Teacher • Author*

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### **The Farm to School connections:**

- 1) Let schools serve healthy locally grown foods.
- 2) Connect farms, food and nutrition.
- 3) Explore agriculture-based opportunities.

For many children in our communities the school meal is the **best** and often the **only** meal they can count on.

Locally grown food tastes **fresher** and **better** than food that has traveled long distances.

**Vibrant local agriculture** ensures that Wisconsin farms thrive, and as a consequence that open spaces, rural landscape and strong healthy communities are preserved.

An **enhanced school curriculum** gives students opportunities they would not otherwise have, for example going to local farms, learning about growing food, nutrition and food preparation. With the state of our economy, these can also be survival skills.

A child with these skills and knowledge is more likely to make **healthy behavior** as a life-long practice, and being healthy, not having to depend on health care to sustain herself or himself.

All of us, you and I, are trying to find ways to sustain our farmers and improve our children's health. A healthy diet can slow the increase in child obesity, diabetes and learning disorders. Medication is a poor answer to this epidemic, not to mention excessive drug costs and the spiraling numbers of the uninsured.

We, you and I, have the tools and the know how to help our farms, our schools and our children, and by doing so, prevent the damage that inaction may bring. These children are the ones who will be sitting where you are some day. They may look back to this session, and without knowing your names, thank you nonetheless, for your vision. I think we owe them this.

This act is a big step forward. I ask you, please, to give us the tool we need, **The Farm to School Program**.

Thank you!

Very sincerely submitted,  
Monique J. Hooker  
Retired Executive Chef  
Farm To School Advocate

## **Middleton Cross Plains Area School District**

District Operations Center  
2130 Pinehurst Drive  
Middleton, WI 53562-0766

Susan M. Peterman, RD, CD, SNS  
Coordinator of Food and Nutrition  
608-829-2346 – phone  
608-828-1595 – fax  
speterman@mcpasd.k12.wi.us

February 24, 2010

It is my pleasure to testify this morning in support of the Wisconsin Farm to School Initiative through Assembly Bill #746. My district, with an enrollment of just under 6,000 students, serves around 4200 school meals each day with an annual budget of \$3.5 million. Each month over 2,000 elementary students have an opportunity to taste fresh food served by our enthusiastic parent volunteers. These products are produced within our state. Students learn about Wisconsin agriculture and recognize that product again when it appears on their school menu for further exploration into the world of fresh, local food.

This school year we have featured Wisconsin grown melons, grape tomatoes, apple cider, cranberries and honey. We will also have fresh Wisconsin carrots with maple syrup glaze, roasted sweet potatoes and hoop house lettuce to round out our year. We research local connections for products using our large volunteer parent network. These forty elementary parents are enthusiastic about fresh food integrated into the institutional food systems of school meals.

A success story: My district has partnered with Lapacek Orchards in Poynette, WI for three school years. Lapacek is a small family agribusiness supporting two Wisconsin farm families. We are able to buy and utilize many smaller apple varieties just right for K-5 students. Lapacek delivers these fresh apple varieties to us from August through January or until the supply ends. Apples are delivered to us each weekly by one of the Lapacek's working in the Middleton community; apple shipping boxes (a significant cost for small growers) are returned upon the next delivery for reuse enhancing our district mission for environmental consciousness. Over the three years of our partnership, our cost has been well below Washington State apples available through our vendor. I recognize Lapacek Orchard on my K-12 school menus reaching over 5,000 households. This benefits the on site retail operation at Lapacek during the active apple marketing season. In January as Lapacek fresh apple stock ends, we shift to a slightly larger operation at Sunset Orchards in Richland Center to continue this pattern in support of Wisconsin agribusiness.

The educational opportunities of these experiences for our students include:

- Exposure to new fresh fruits, vegetables and grains as part of a lifelong model for quality nutrition and health
- Ability to identify where a product is grown and understand the seasonality of WI agriculture
- Capacity of classroom teacher to integrate the food experiences into classroom curriculum for additional learning about nutrition, WI history and agriculture
- The joy of discovering different foods as a fun experience at school and to take information home to families who may be more likely to search out other opportunities for fresh, local food

The business opportunities for Wisconsin growers partnering with local schools include:

- A new seasonal market for products in varying quantities dependent upon the size of the business and district (A significant percentage of Wisconsin school districts are small enhancing the opportunity for small growers to partner with a district or private school suited to their growing capacity)
- Marketing through school programs enhances a local growers recognition among a customer base that may support local farmer's markets and site based retail operations
- An opportunity to participate in the educational process reconnecting students with the origin of their food sources

Thank you for considering Assembly bill # 746 promoting the use of locally grown food in school meals. This bill may encourage other schools to find local growers for part of their school meal products further supporting the cycle of community economic sustainability.



Susan M. Peterman, RD, CD, SNS  
Coordinator of School Nutrition



February 24, 2010

To: Wisconsin Assembly Committee on Agriculture

From: ~~Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association~~

Re: **WCMA Support for AB 746; AB 748 and AB 756**

WCMA  
8030 Excelsior Drive  
Suite 305  
Madison, WI 53717-1950

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Website  
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Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association represents the majority of cheese manufacturers, cheese processors and dairy marketers in Wisconsin. We appreciate the opportunity to express our support for these bills.

**WCMA supports AB 746**, promoting locally-grown food in school meals and snacks. The program has the potential to link locally-produced cheese and other dairy products with Wisconsin schools. To that end, WCMA respectfully requests that this committee consider the explicit addition of dairy products to the bill, for example in Section 5 the new 93.49 (1) Definition and in 93.49 (2)(b)(1) could note dairy products.

**WCMA supports AB 748**, which suspends for one year the assessment fee milk contractors pay to the Agricultural Producer Security program (APS). This bill originated from dairy farm cooperatives whose hard-working dairy farmer members in 2009 weathered the most difficult financial year in decades. The intent is simple: freeze assessment payments to the producer security fund for one year to make additional money available to milk contractors to pay to dairy producers.

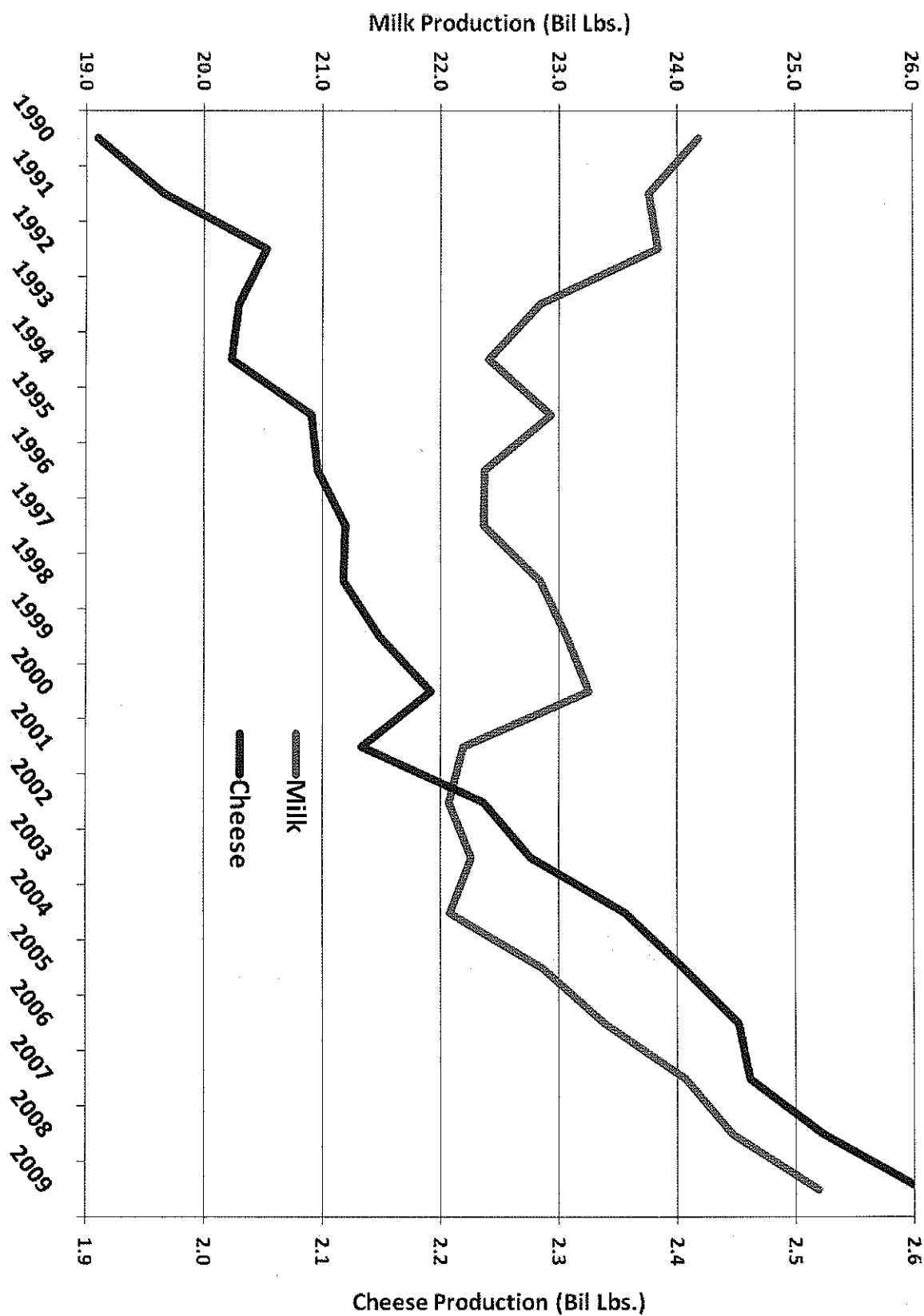
With more than \$10 million in its indemnity fund pool, the APS program has ample funds to cover most dairy industry defaults. The additional (estimated) \$650,000 in assessment dollars that milk contractors will pay next year represents 6 percent of the fund. This bill anticipates that this \$650,000 would be better retained for use in dairy producer milk checks in 2010.

**WCMA supports AB 756**, which extends the dairy farm modernization tax credit for two additional years. The bill is timely and important for several reasons:

1. Wisconsin dairy producers will require the next two years, 2010 and 2011, to rebuild equity and repay loans following the worst financial year for dairy in decades. This tax credit will benefit the bottom line of dairy farms that move forward with farm improvement plans in anticipation of better times ahead.
2. Wisconsin, despite a year of across-the-board losses on dairy farms, has grown milk production in the last five years after a decade of concern that the industry may stagnate and fail. Last year's record 25 billion pounds of fresh farm milk was an achievement tempered by red ink. This bill will continue to spur improvements on farms and improve the quality of life for dairy farmers, increase cow comfort, and put more milk in bulk tanks.
3. **Wisconsin needs the milk!** Demand for Wisconsin cheese has never been higher and the state continues its success in producing higher value cheeses and dairy products and fewer commodity products. To meet demand, Wisconsin cheesemakers supplement fresh Wisconsin milk with nonfat dry milk and concentrated milk from other states. About 13 percent of the milk used in the state came from these outside sources to fill vats and fill orders.



# Wisconsin Milk & Cheese Production



**Assembly Committee on Agriculture  
February 24, 2010**

**Department of Public Instruction  
Testimony on 2009 Assembly Bill 746**

Thank you to Chairperson Vruwink and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify before you today in support of Assembly Bill 746 (AB 746). My name is Jennifer Kammerud, I am the legislative liaison for the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and with me today is June Paul, Director of our School Nutrition Team.

The State Superintendent and the staff at the DPI cannot overstate the importance of nutrition, health, and physical education in ensuring that every student has the opportunity to learn healthy habits and carry those habits forward both during and after their formal pre-K-12 education has been completed. Our work to target obesity crosses teams and divisions as we coordinate our efforts in the areas of nutrition, health and wellness, and physical education. The department sees this bill as a critical addition to our efforts as we believe it will lead to more connectivity between schools and nearby farms leading to fresher foods in school meals and snacks and better eating habits by students.

The department would like to thank Representative Vruwink and Senator Lassa for agreeing to an amendment to the bill to recognize the department's concern with the grant program to school districts. The amendment requires DATCP to coordinate with DPI in awarding grants to school districts. In this way we can better ensure that we are not duplicating efforts or are at cross-purposes given DPI's responsibilities in this area.

DPI's responsibilities related to school nutrition are broad. The Department provides instructional support to schools in the areas of agriculture education and nutrition. DPI's School Nutrition Team oversees the federal school lunch, special milk, breakfast, after school snack, and fresh fruit and vegetable programs.

The DPI also provides technical assistance and training for food service personnel on school nutrition programs and we evaluate meals served through the School Meal Initiative Nutrient Analysis (SMI), which is a measure of consistency with the USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans. This analysis is completed by DPI's Public Health Nutritionists who are Registered Dietitians. Part of the SMI process includes consultative assistance by the Public Health Nutritionists as well as Nutrition Program Consultants to develop improvement plans to meet the nutrition standards.

The department has awarded grants to school districts for the purchase of equipment for food preparation and we operate distribution warehouses across the state for schools participating in the federal meal programs.

Through the Wisconsin Growers Initiative, DPI and USDA encourage schools to purchase locally grown, unprocessed, agricultural products and we encourage schools to establish a standard process for purchasing foods from local growers.

The department, along with others, also provides access to a local harvest database of local growers. Any individual may search this database by location and food type. The database will list local growers that are willing to provide food to schools. Any local grower may register to participate in this program free of charge by filling out an on-line application.

The department's work in the area of farm to school and school nutrition is extensive. We welcome the bill's formalization of our coordination with other state agencies as amended and are encouraged by the potential in the grants to school districts. This bill will strengthen and build upon the work being done and we thank the authors for bringing it forward.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have.



State of Wisconsin  
Jim Doyle, Governor

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**Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection**  
Rod Nilsestuen, Secretary

Date: February 24, 2010

To: Distinguished Members of the Assembly Committee on Agriculture

From: Teresa Cuperus and Camilla Vargas – Agricultural Market Development Bureau  
Division of Agricultural Development  
Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection

RE: Assembly Bill 746

Thank you for receiving the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection's testimony in support of AB746.

The development of the "Local food economy" is one of the most rapidly growing, economically, socially, and culturally important opportunities in agriculture today. Supporting the growth of locally grown food positively impacts farmers, communities, consumer nutrition, and Wisconsin's economy. More specifically, farm to school programs encourage community development and involvement, address children's nutrition, and provide innovative approaches to new markets for Wisconsin agricultural producers.

Currently, there are numerous programs and initiatives around the state that are building the infrastructure for Farm to School by identifying hurdles and providing innovative solutions.

DATCP administers the Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin program, an economic development program passed in Governor Doyle's 2007-09 budget with thanks to Senator Lassa and to all who helped pass the bill. In relation to farm to school, Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin is providing key resources and programs for local food producers, as well as funding projects that are addressing aggregation and distribution of products.

Additionally, DATCP is working in partnership with the Department of Health Services, the Department of Public Instruction, the University of Wisconsin's Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems, REAP food group, and many other organizations to collaborate and work together. Each of these organizations and agencies has been doing tremendous work for farm to school. One example of the success of this partnership is the AmeriCorps Farm to School Program.

AmeriCorps Farm to School is a statewide effort supporting ten Wisconsin communities by providing two half-time AmeriCorps members. One member identifies and addresses hurdles facing local food procurement in school while building relationships and support for WI farmers. The other member provides nutrition education to students K-12 by implementing curriculum, which incorporates school gardens, local food tastings and farm field trips.

While these programs have proven their success and have illustrated the impact of farm to school, they have not been able to meet the overwhelming needs on a statewide level. A statewide Wisconsin farm to school program would provide coordination, improve efficiencies, and allow for networking of innovative ideas. A dedicated farm to school program would result in a more rapid demonstration and development of innovative approaches to increase local, healthy foods in schools; it would improve children's nutrition, enhance their educational performance, and affect new markets for Wisconsin farmers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of AB746.

*Agriculture generates \$59 billion for Wisconsin*

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February 23, 2010

From: Diane Chapeta

Director of Child Nutrition Services

Director of the North East Wisconsin Farm to School Initiative

Chilton & Hilbert Public Schools

530 W Main St

Chilton, WI 53014

To: The Committee on Agriculture

Madison, WI

Subject: Bill 746

Relating to: Promoting the use of locally grown food in school meals and snacks, and granting rule-making authority.

To the Committee:

The Chilton and Hilbert Public School districts have worked for two and a half years to change how we view our children's lunch tray. With the onset of each school year we re-introduce whole foods, while quietly removing processed, sodium-laden, and high fat items. Our nutritional numbers per meal have improved drastically, while fat and sodium counts continue to drop. I no longer take the time to count servings of fruits and vegetables on the menus per day, per week, or per month. Our program supplies all the fruits and vegetables our students can eat.

This remarkable turn-about in how we feed our students can be credited to one source; farm to school. To date our small, rural districts purchase locally grown (raised) fruits, vegetables, pastured, grass-fed beef, pork, and cheese from five local farms, and one cheese processor. Our budgets are in the black, and our students are learning, some for the first time, what fresh food actually tastes like. The bulk of our potatoes are no longer in the shape of tots, fries, or waffles and our mashed potatoes no longer come from a can. French fries are now a "treat", served perhaps once a month. We have successfully incorporated fresh, wholesome foods with "kid friendly" cuisine.

But the advantages don't stop there. Our farm partners have also reaped the benefits of this program. The orchard owner now has a customer for apples too small to sell in a commercial market. Our livestock operation has more than doubled her herd, maxing out her pasture capabilities. Our dairy operator has a market in which he can sell his steers, rather than pay to have them taken away. And the small vegetable grower custom orders a variety of seed, allowing him to diversify.

The communities surrounding our schools are grateful of the support farm to school affords our farm partners, and delighted their children are eating a healthy balance of locally grown foods. School lunch in our area of northeast Wisconsin is no longer a cause for alarm, but a cause for celebration.

Please consider the legislation before you and the impact it may bring to farms and our children.

Thank you,

Diane Chapeta

February 23, 2010

From: Dillon Grabski

420 College Ave #25

De Pere, WI 54115

Senior at West De Pere High School

To: The Committee on Agriculture

Madison, WI

Subject: Bill 746

Relating to: Promoting the use of locally grown food in school meals and snacks, and granting rule-making authority.

To the Committee:

My name is Dillon Grabski. I am a senior at West De Pere high school. I am here today to tell you of my experiences on the school lunch line in northeast Wisconsin.

For two years I attended Chilton high school. During that time I purchased breakfast from mobile carts in the halls, and lunch from the school servery nearly every day. I loved the food.

Please believe me when I say "I loved the food", because honestly I did. The options on the lunch lines were amazing. We had real beef burgers, tasty homemade chili, marinated, grilled chicken breast club sandwiches, and a bevy of fruits and vegetables daily. I never walked away feeling hungry, yet I never felt overstuffed either.

When my family moved and I transferred schools, I was shocked that my new cafeteria had very little fresh produce to choose from, and more so, even less enjoyable lunch options. Gone were the grilled chicken breasts, and in their place...chicken mc nuggets. After my first day at my new school district I did something I never thought I would do. I bought a personal cooler and a refillable water bottle. I began to load the grocery list on the side of the refrigerator with my demands for lunch options. And at the age of sixteen, I started packing a lunch. I have never stopped.

I'm asking that you consider the legislation before you today, and think of students like myself, who have tasted the benefits of local purchasing. And then please think of the students who have yet to see fresh raspberries, crisp apples, and real potatoes at school for lunch.

Thank you,

Dillon Grabski